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Such minute Contents to so short an Essay, may seem disproportionable and needless: But it was done for ease to the memorie of some, for whom it was more particularly design'd: And can prejudice none, who need not such Helps.

A

A

Short and eaſie Method

WITH THE

DEISTS.

SIR,

IN Anſwer to yours, of the Third Inſtant, I much condole with you your Unhappy Circumſtances of being placed amongſt ſuch Company, where, as you ſay, you continually hear the Sacred *Scriptures*, and the Hiſtories therein contain'd, particularly of *Moſes* and of *Chriſt*, and all *Reveal'd* Religion turn'd into Ridicule, by men who ſet up for *Senſe* and *Reaſon*. And they ſay, That there is no greater Ground to believe in *Chriſt*, than in *Mahomet*: That all theſe Pretences to *Revelation* are *Cheats*, and ever had been among *Pagans*, *Jews*, *Mahumetans*, and *Chriſtians*: They are all alike

Impoſitions of cunning and deſigning men, upon the Credulity, at firſt, of ſimple and unthinking people, till, their numbers encreaſing, their deluſions grew popular, come, at laſt to be eſtabliſhed by Laws, and then the force of Education and Cuſtom gives a Byaſs to the Judgement of After Ages, till ſuch deceits come really to be believ'd, being receiv'd upon Truſt from the Ages foregoing, without examining into the Original and Bottom of them, which theſe Our modern Men of Senſe (as they deſire to be eſteem'd) ſay, that they only do, that they only have their Judgements freed from the ſlaviſh Authority of Precedents and Laws, and matters of *Truth*, which they ſay, ought only to be decided by Reaſon: Tho' by a prudent Complyance with Popularity and Laws, they preſerve themſelves from Outrage and Legal Penalties, for none of their Complexions are addicted to Sufferings or *Martyrdome*.

Now, Sir, That which you deſire from me, is ſome ſhort *Topick* of Reaſon, if ſuch can be found, whereby, without running to Authorities, and the intricate *Mazes* of Learning, which breed long Diſputes, and which theſe *Men* of Reaſon deny by whole-ſale, tho' they can give no Reaſon for it, only ſuppoſe that Authors have been trump'd upon us, *interpolated* and *corrupted*, ſo that no ſtreſs can be laid upon them, tho' it cannot be ſhewen wherein they

they are ſo corrupted; which, in Reaſon ought to ly upon them to prove, who alledge it; otherwayes it is not only a *Precarious* but a *guiltie plea*: However, you ſay, it makes your Diſputes endleſs, and they go away with Noiſe and Clamour, and a Boaſt, that there is nothing, at leaſt nothing certain, to be laid on the Chriſtian ſide: Therefore you are deſirous to find ſome one *Topick* of Reaſon, which ſhould demonſtrat the Truth of the *Chriſtian Religion*, and, at the ſame time, diſtinguiſh it from the Impoſtures of *Mahomet*, and the old *Pagan World*; That our *Deiſts* may be brought to this Teſt, and be either oblig'd to renounce their *Reaſon*, and the *common Reaſon* of Mankind, or to ſubmit to the clear proof, from *Reaſon*, of the *Chriſtian Religion*, which muſt be ſuch a Proof, as no Impoſture can pretend to, otherwiſe it cannot prove the *Chriſtian Religion* not to be an Impoſture. And, whether ſuch a Proof, one ſingle Proof (to avoid confuſion) is not to be found out, you deſire to know from me.

And you ſay, that you cannot imagine but there muſt be ſuch a *Proof*, becauſe every *Truth* is in it ſelf clear, and one, and therefore that one Reaſon for it, if it be the true Reaſon, muſt be ſufficient: And, if ſufficient, it is better than many, for Multiplicity confounds, eſpecially to weak Judgements.

Sir,

Sir, You have impoſed an hard Task upon me, I wiſh I could perform it: For tho' *Every Truth is one*, yet our ſight is ſo feeble, that we cannot (alwiſe) come to it directly, but by many Inferences, and laying of things together.

But I think that in the Caſe before us, there is ſuch a *Proof* as you require; and I will ſet it down, as ſhort and plain as I can.

II. Firſt then I ſuppoſe, That the Truth of the Doctrine of CHRIST will be ſufficiently evinced, if the *matters of fact* which are recorded of Him in the *Goſpel* be True? for His *Miracles*, if true, do vouch the Truth of what He delivered.

The ſame is to be ſaid as to *Moſes*, if he brought the Children of *Iſrael* through the *Red-Sea*, in that miraculous manner which is related in *Exodus*, and did ſuch other wonderful things as are there told of him? It muſt neceſſarily follow, that he was ſent from *GOD*; Theſe being the ſtrongeſt Proofs we can deſire, and which every *Deiſt* will confeſs he would acquieſce in, if he ſaw them with his Eyes. Therefore the whole of this Cauſe will depend upon the Proof of theſe *matters of fact*.

1. And the method I will take, is, *Firſt*, To lay down ſuch Rules, as to the Truth of *matters of fact*, that where they all meet, ſuch *matters*

+ See 7 Rules in Mr Du Pins method of Studying Divinity p. 60 8vo Lond 1720—

ters of fact cannot be false: And then, *secondly*, To shew that all these Rules do meet in the *matters of fact* of *Moses*, and of *Christ*; and that they do not meet in the *matters of fact* of *Mahomet*, of the *Heathen Deities*, or can possibly meet in any *Imposture* whatsoever.

2. The Rules are these, *1st* [That the *matters of fact* be such, as that Mens *outward Senses*, their *Eyes* and *Ears* may be *Judges* of it. 2. That it be done publickly in the *face of the World*. 3. That not only *publick monuments* be kept in *memory* of it, but some *outward Actions* to be performed. 4. That such *monuments* and such *Actions* or *Observances* be instituted, and do commence from the time that the *matter of fact* was done.]

3. The two first Rules make it impossible for any such *matter of fact* to be imposed upon Men at the time when such *matter of fact* was said to be done; because every Man's Eyes and Senses would contradict it. For Example, Suppose any man should pretend that Yesterday he divided the *Thames*, in presence of all the People in *London*, and carried the whole City, Men, Women, and Children, over to *Southwark* on dry Land, the Waters standing like Walls on both sides: I say, it is morally impossible that he could perswade the People of *London* that this was true, when every Man, Woman, and Child, could contradict him, and say, that this was

a notorious falſhood, for that they had not ſeen the *Thames* ſo divided, or had gone over on dry Land. Therefore I take it for granted, (and, I ſuppoſe, with all the allowance of all the *Deiſts* in the World) that no ſuch Impoſition could be put upon men, at the time when ſuch publick *matters of fact* was ſaid to be done.

4. Therefore it only remains, that ſuch *matters of fact* might be invented ſome time after, when the men of that Generation, wherein the thing was ſaid to be done, are all paſt and gone; and the Credulity of After-Ages might be impoſed upon to believe what things were done in former ages, which were not.

And for this, the two laſt Rules ſecure us as much as the two firſt Rules in the former Caſe, for when ever ſuch a *matter of fact* came to be invented, if not only *Monuments* were ſaid to remain of it, but likewayes that publick *Actions* & Obſervances were conſtantly uſ'd, ever ſince the *matter of fact* was ſaid to be done, the Deceit muſt be detected, by no ſuch *Monuments* appearing, and by the Experience of every *Man*, Woman, and Child, who muſt know that no ſuch *Actions* or Obſervances were ever uſ'd by them. For Example, Suppoſe I ſhould now invent a Story of ſuch a thing, done a thouſand years ago, I might, perhaps, get ſome to believe it: But

if

if I ſay, that not only ſuch a thing was done, but that from that day to this, every man, at the age of twelve Years, had a Joint of his little Finger cut off; And, that every man in the Nation did want a Joint of ſuch a *Finger*, and this Obſervation was laid to be part of the *matter of fact* done ſo many years agoe, and vouch'd as a proof and confirmation of it, and as having deſcended, without Interruption, and been conſtantly practis'd, in memory of ſuch *matters of fact*, all along, from the time that ſuch *matters of fact* was done: I ſay, it is impoſſible I ſhould be believ'd in ſuch a Caſe, becauſe every one could contradict me, as to the Mark of cutting of a Joint off the Finger; and that being part of my Original *matter of fact*, muſt demonſtrate the whole to be falſe.

III. Let us now come to the ſecond Point, to ſhew, that the *matters of fact* of *Moſes*, and of *Chriſt*, have all theſe Rules or Marks before mentioned, and that neither the *matters of fact* of *Mahomet*, or what is reported of the *Heathen Deities* have the like; and that no Impoſture can have them all.

1. As to *Moſes*: His reſcuing the People of *Iſrael* out of *Ægypt*, in ſuch a wonderful manner; dividing the *Red Sea*, &c. is not only told, but likewayes that the *Paſſover* was then, at that very time, inſtituted; and that

the

the Observation of it has continu'd from that time down all along, in all the Families of the *Jews*, in remembrance of that *miraculous* Deliverance. To the same purpose was the *Sabbath* then commanded, *Deut:* 5 15. and several other publick and solemn Institutions.

Now, as it was impossible for *Moses* to have perswaded six hundred thousand Men, that he had brought them out *Ægypt*, through the *Red-Sea*, *&c.* if it had not been true; So, if such a Story was invented in After Ages, and the Observation of the *Passover*, from that time, said to be a part of the *matter of fact*, it must necessarily shew the whole to be false, because when that Story was first invented, every Body must know, that they had never observ'd any *Passover* in memory of such a thing, or ever heard of it before; and it being told, that as certainly as such a thing was done, so certainly was such a *Passover* kept, and that not only by one or two in a corner, but publickly, and by the Law of the Nation, and in every Family: I say, it is full as impossible to make men believe this, if it be a Lye, as to have perswaded all those men out of their Senses, at the time when the thing was said to be done. For, let me ask, is it not as impossible to make a whole Nation of men believe, that they had been all *Circumcis'd* or *Baptis'd*, and did *Circumcise* or *Baptise* their Children, that they kept, and alwayes had

had done every *Seventh Day*; a ſolemn Yearly *Paſſover*, &c. If they had never done any of theſe things; and that they had not only kept theſe *Obſervations*, but likewayes that they kept them in memory of what they had never heard of before that Day: I ſay, it is not as impoſſible to perſwade men to this: And is it not as much againſt their *Senſes*, as well as their *Reaſon*, as to make them believe that they had paſs'd through a *Sea*, or any other *matter of fact* that can be nam'd? And the Truth of the firſt *matter of fact* ſaid to be done ſo many hundred years agoe, being urged, when firſt invented, to be no further believ'd, than as theſe Obſervances have been known and practis'd; and theſe publick Obſervances, being brought as a *proof* and *confirmation* of the firſt *matter of fact*, It is as much againſt the Senſes of that Age, wherein ſuch Story was firſt invented, to believe it, as it was againſt the Senſes of thoſe who liv'd when ſuch a Story was ſaid to be done, to have believ'd it at that time. And therefore, where any *matter of fact* is attended with all the Rules and Marks before mentioned, it is as impoſſible to invent it in any After Ages without a Diſcovery, as to have impoſed it upon the Senſes of Mankind, at the time when it was ſaid to be done.

2. Now *ſecondly*, As to our *Bleſſed Saviour* his Works and Miracles, which are recorded of him in the *Goſpels*, are ſaid to be done publickly,

lickly, In the face of the World, as he argu'd to His Accusers. *I spake openlie to the World, and in secret have I said nothing*, John 14. 10. It is told, *Acts* 11. 41. That three thousand at one time, and *Acts* 4. 4. that about five thousand at another time were converted, upon Conviction of what themselves had seen, what had been done publickly before their Eyes, wherein it was impossible to have impos'd upon them. Therefore here were the two first of the Rules before mentioned.

Then for the two second: *Baptism*, and the *Lord's Supper*, were instituted as perpetual Memorials of these things, and they were not instituted in after ages, but at the very time when these things were said to be done, and have been observed without Interruption, in all ages through the whole Christian World, down all the way from that time to this. And therefore, by what is said above, it was as impossible to have impos'd upon Mankind in this matter, by inventing of it in *After-Ages*, as at the time when those things were said to be done.

3. The *matters of fact* of *Mahomet*, or what is fabled of the *Heathen Deities*, do all want some of the aforesaid four Rules, whereby the certainty of *matters of fact* are demonstrated. *First*, for *Mahomet*, he pretended to no miracles, as he tells us in his *Alcoran*, *c.* 6. *&c.* and those which are commonly told of him, pass among the *Mahumetans* themselves but as Le-

gendary

gendary fables, and, as such, are rejected by the Wise and learned amongst them, as the Legends of their Saints are in the Church of *Rome*. See Dr. *Prideaux* his Life of *Mahomet*, page 34.

But in the next place, those which are told of him, do all want the two first Rules before mentioned. For his pretended converse with the *Moon*, his *Mesra*, or night journey from *Mecca* to *Jerusalem*, and thence to *Heaven*, *&c.* were not perform'd before any body. We have only his own word for them, and they are as groundless as the Delusions of *Fox* or *Muggleton* amongst our selves. The same is to be said (in the second place) of the fables of the *Heathen Gods*, of *Mercurie*'s stealling sheep, *Jupiter*'s turning himself into a *Bull*, and the like, besides the folly and unworthiness of such senseless pretended miracles. And moreover, the Wise among the *Heathen* did reckon no otherwise of these but as fables, which had a *Mythologie* or mistical meaning in them, of which several of them had given us the *Rational*, or *Explication*: And it is plain enough that *Ovid* meant no other by all his *Metamorphoses*.

It is true, that *Feasts*, *Games*, and such like *Publick Institutions*, were appointed in memory of *Bacchus*, *Ceres*, and other of the *Heathen Deities*: But these want the fourth mark, *viz.* That such publick Institutions should *Commence* from the time that such actions which they com-

Commemorate were said to be done. Otherwise they cannot secure After Ages from the Imposture, by detecting it, at the time when first invented, as hath been argu'd before. But the *Bacchnalia*, and other *Heathen Feasts*, were instituted many Ages after what was reported of these Gods, was said to be done, and therefore can be no proof of them.

IV. Now, to apply what has been said, you may challenge all the *Deists* in the World to shew any Action that is fabulous, which has all the four *Rules* or *marks* before mentioned. No, it's impossible, And (to resume a little what is spoke to before) the History of *Exodus* or the *Gospel* could never have been received, if they had not been True, because the Institution of the *Passover*, of *Baptism* and the LORD's *Supper* are there related, as memorials then *commeneed*, and so to descend through the succeeding Ages: And (as I said before) it is full as impossible to perswade men, that they had kept *Passovers*, and received *Sacraments*, if they had not done it, as that they walked upon their Heads, went through *Seas*, or what you please.

And the Truth of the *matter of fact* of *Exodus* and the *Gospel*, being no otherwise press'd upon Men, than as they had practis'd such publick Institutions, it is appealing to the Senses of Mankind for the Truth of them: And makes it impossible for any to have invented such Stories in After Ages, without a palpa-

ble

ble Detection of the Cheat when first invented, as impossible to have impos'd upon the Senses of mankind, at the time, when such *publick matters of fact* were said to be done.

V. I do not say, that every thing which wants these four *Marks* is false: But that nothing can be false which has them *All*.

I have no manner of doubt that there was such a Man as *Julius Cæsar*, that he fought at *Pharsalia*, was killed in the *Senate-House*, and many other *matters of fact* of Ancient times, tho' we keep no *publick Observances* in memory of them.

But this shews, that the *matters of fact* of *Moses* and of *Christ* have come down to Us, better guarded than any other *matters of fact*, how true soever.

And yet our *Deists* who would laugh any Man out of the World, as an irrational *Brute*, that should offer to deny *Cæsar* or *Alexander*, *Homer* or *Virgil*, their *Publick Works* and *Actions*, do at the same time value themselves, as the only Men of Wit and Sense, of *free, generous*, and *unbyast Judgements* for Ridiculating the Histories of *Moses* and *Christ*, that are infinitly better attested, and guarded with infallible *Marks*, which the others want.

VI. Besides that, the importance of the subject would oblige all Men, to enquire more narrowly into the one than the other: For what Consequence is it to me, or to the

World, whether there was such a Man as *Cæsar*, whether he beat or was beaten at *Pharsalia*? whether *Homer* or *Virgil* wrote such Books? and whether what is related in the *Iliads* or *Æneids* be true or false! It is not two Pence up or down to any Man in the World. And therefore it is worth no Mans while to inquire into it, Either to oppose or justifie the Truth of these Relations.

But on every Souls and Bodies, both this Life and Eternity are concerned in the Truth of what is related in the Holy *Scriptures*: And therefore Men would be more inquisitive into the Truth of these, than of any other *matters of fact*, Examine and sift them narrowly, and find out the deceit, if any such could be found; for it concerned them nearly, and was of the last importance to them.

How unreasonable then is it to reject these *matters of fact*, so sifted, so Examined, and so attested, as no other *matters of fact* in the World ever were, and yet to think it the most highly unreasonable, even to madness to deny other *matters of fact*, which have not the thousandth part of their Evidence, and are of no Consequence at all to us, whether true or false!

VII. There are several other Topicks, from whence the Truth of the Christian Religion is evinced to all who will Judge by Reason, and give themselves leave to consider. As the improbability that ten or twelve poor illiterat

Fisher

Fishermen should form a design of Converting the whole World to believe their Delusions: and the impossibility of their effecting it without force of Arms, *Learning*, *Oratory*, or any one visible thing that could recommend them? And to impose a *Doctrine* quite opposite to the *Lusts* and *Pleasures* of men, and all *worldly Advantages*; or *Enjoyments*? And this in an age of so great Learning and Sagacity, as that wherein the Gospel was first preached? That those *Apostles* should not only undergo all the Scorn and Contempt, but the severest persecutions and most cruel death that could be inflicted, in attestation to what themselves knew to be a meer deceit, and forgery of their own contriving, some have suffered for *Errors*, which they thought to be *Truth*: But never any for what themselves knew to be *Lyes*. And the *Apostles* must know what they taught to be Lies, if it was so, because they spoke of those things, which they said, they had both seen and heard, had looked upon, and *handled with their Hands*, &c. *Act.* 4. 20. 1 *Joh.* 1. 1.

Neither can it be said, that they, perhaps, might have propos'd some temporal Advantages to themselves, but miss'd of them, and met with Sufferings in stead of them: For if it had been so, it is more than probable, that when they saw their Disappointment, they would have discover'd their conspiracy, especially when they might not only have saved

their Lives, but got great Rewards for doing of it. That not one of them ſhould ever have been brought to do this?

But this is not all; For they tell us, that their Maſter bid them expect nothing but *Sufferings* in this World. This is the Tenure of all that Goſpel which they taught: And they told the ſame to all whom they converted. So that here was no diſappointment.

For all that were converted by them, were converted upon the certain Expectation of *Sufferings*, and bidden prepare for it. *Chriſt* commanded His *Diſciples*, to take up their *Croſs*, and follow Him: And told them, that in the World they ſhould have Tribulation: That whoever did not forſake *Father*, *Mother*, *Wife*, *Children*, *Lands*, and their very *Lives*, could not be His *Diſciples*: That he who *ſought to ſave his Life* in this World, ſhould *loſe* it in the Next.

Now, That this deſpis'd *Doctrine* of the *Croſs*, ſhould prevail ſo univerſally againſt the *Allurements* of *Fleſh* and *Blood*, and all the Blandiſhments of this World: Againſt all the *Rage* and *perſecution* of all the Kings and Powers of the Earth, muſt ſhew its Original to be Divine, and its *Protector*, *Almighty*. What is it elſe, could Conquer without *Arms*, Perſwade without *Rhetorick*; overcome *Enemies*, diſarm *Tyrants*, and ſubdue Empires, without Oppoſition?

VIII. We

VIII. We may add to all this, the Teſtimonies of the moſt bitter *Enemies*, and *Perſecutors* of *Chriſtianity*, *Jews* and *Gentiles*, to the *Truth* of the *matter of fact* of *Chriſt*, ſuch as *Joſephus* and *Tacitus*; of which the firſt flouriſhed about fourty years after the Death of *Chriſt*, and the other about ſeventy years after: So that they were capable of Examining into the *Truth*, and wanted not prejudice and malice ſufficient to have inclin'd them to deny the *matter of fact* it ſelf of *Chriſt*: But their confeſſing to it: as likewiſe, *Lucian*, *Celſus*, *Porphyrie*, and *Julian* the *Apoſtate*, the *Mahumetans* ſince, and all other Enemies of *Chriſtianity* that have ariſen in the World, is an undenyable Atteſtation to the Truth of the *matters of fact*.

XI. Theſe and other Topicks, which have been inſiſted upon by thoſe who have managed this Argument, cannot nor ought to be denyed by any Man who pretends to common Senſe. And it is very lamentable to ſee a *wide mouth*, a ſcornful *Nod*, or *Lyar*, and a *Noiſie Effrontery*, impatient of Argument or Contradiction, carry it away with ſome unthinking People, againſt all the Reaſon and Authority in the World, only becauſe they ſay, that notwithſtanding of all your *probabilities*, however artful laid together, yet it is *poſſible* to be otherwiſe: And they demand, for *matters of fact* long ſince paſt, a Demonſtration from the *Outward Senſes* of the preſent

Age,

Age. That is, that I should see or hear what was before I was born. Which is a method they would *Hoot* at, if propos'd in any other Case.

X. But tho, wee cannot see what was done before our Time, yet by the *marks* which I have laid down concerning the *Certaintie* of *matters of Fact* done before our Time, we may be as much Assur'd of the *Truth* of'em, as if we saw them with our Eyes? because whatever *matter of Fact* has all the four *marks* before mention'd, could never have been *Invented* and *Receiv'd* but upon the Conviction of the *outward Senses* of All those who did *Receive* it, as before is Demonstrated. And therefore this *Topick* which I have Chosen, does stand upon the *Conviction* even of mens *outward Senses*. And since you have confin'd me to *one* Topick, I have not insisted upon the others which I have only Nam'd:

XI. And now it lies upon the *Deists*, if they wou'd appear as men of *Reason*, to shew some *matter of Fact* of former Ages, which they Allow to be *True*, that has greater *Evidences* of its *Truth*, than the *matters of Fact* of *Moses* and of *Christ:* Otherwise they cannot, with any shew of *Reason*, Reject the one, and yet Admit of the other.

But I have given them greater Latitude than this, For I have shewn such *marks* of the *Truth* of the *matters of Fact* of *Moses* and of *Christ*, as no other *matters of Fact* of those

Times,

Times however *True*, have but these only: *And* I put it upon them to shew any *Forgery* that has *All* these *marks*.

This is a short *Issue*, Keep them close to, This determines the *Cause* All at Once.

Let them Produce their *Apollonius Tyanæus*, whose Life was put into *English* by the Execrable *Charles Blount*, and compar'd, with all the *Wit* and *malice* he was Master of, to the *Life* and *Miracles* of our Blessed *Saviour*.

Let them take Aid from all the *Legends* in the Church of *Rome*, those *Pious Cheats*, the foulest *Disgraces* of *Christianity*; and which have bid the fairest, of any one Contrivance, to overturn the *Certainty* of the *Miracles* of *Christ* and his *Apostles*, and whole *Truth* of the *Gospell*, by putting them All upon the same *Foot*; At least, they are so Understood by the Generality of their *Devotoes*, tho' *Disown'd* and *Laugh'd at* by the *Learned*, and men of *Sense* among men.

Let them Pick and Choose the most Probable of all the *Fables* of the *Heathen Deities*; and see if they can find in any or All of these the four *marks* before mention'd.

Otherwise let them submit to the Irrefragable *Certainty* of the *Christian* Religion.

XII. But if, notwithstanding of all that is said, the *Deists* will still contend, That all this is but *Priest-Craft*, the Invention of *Priests*, for their own Profit, *&c.* Then they will give us an *Idea* of *Priests* far Differ-

rent from what they intend: For then, we must look upon these *Priests*, not only as the *Cunningest* and *Wisest* of *Mankind*; but we shall be tempted to adore them as *Deities*, who have such Power as to impose, at their Pleasure, upon the Senses of Mankind, to make them believe, That they had practis'd such *Publick Institutions*, Enacted them by *Laws*, taught them to their *Children*, &c. when they had never done any of these things, or ever so much as heard of them before: And then, upon the Credit of their believing that they had done such things as they never did, to make them further believe, upon the same Foundation, whatever they pleas'd to impose upon them as to former Ages; I say, such a *Power* as this must exceed all that is Humane; and consequently make Us Rank these *Priests* farr above the Condition of Mortals.

2. Nay, this were to make them out-do all that has ever been Related of the *Infernal Powers*: For, tho' their *Legerdemaine* has extended to deceive some unwary Beholders, and their Power of working some seeming miracles has been Great, yet it never Reach'd, nor ever was suppos'd to Reach so far as to Deceive the Senses of all Mankind, in matters of such *publick* and *notorious Nature* as those of which we now speak, to make them Believe, that they had Enacted *Laws* for such *publick Observances*, continually practis'd them, taught them to their *Children*, and had been

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inſtructed in them themſelves, from their *Childhold*, if they had never *Enacted*, *practis'd*, *taught*, or been *taught* ſuch things.

3. And as this exceeds all the *power of Hell*, and *Devils*; So is it more than ever GOD *Almighty* has done ſince the Foundation of the World: None of the Miracles that He has ſhewen, or Belief which he has required to any thing that he has reveal'd, has ever contradicted the *Outward Senſes* of any one Man in the World, much leſs of all Mankind together. For *Miracles* being Appeals to our *Outward Senſes*, if they ſhould overthrow the *Certainty of our Outward Senſes*, muſt deſtroy with it all their own *Certainty* as to Us; Since we have no other way to judge of a Miracle exhibited to our Senſes, than upon the Suppoſition of the *Certainty* of our Senſes, upon which we give Credit to a Miracle, that is ſhewen to our Senſes.

4. This, by the way, is a yet Unanſwer'd Argument againſt the *Miracle* of *Trans-ſubſtantiation*, and ſhews the weakneſs of the Defence which the *Church* of *Rome* offers for it, (from whom the *Socinians* have lick'd it up, and of late, have Glory'd much in it amongſt Us) That the Doctrines of the *Trinity* or *Incarnation* contain as great ſeeming Abſurdities as that of *Trans-ſubſtantiation*: For I would ask, which of our Senſes is it which the Doctrines of the *Trinity* or *Incarnation* do contradict? is it our *Seeing*, *Hearing*, *Feeling*, *Taſte*, or *Smell*?

Whereas

Whereas *Trans-substantiation* does contradict all of those. Therefore the *Comparison* is Exceedingly *short*, and out of Purpose. But to Return,

If the *Christian* Religion be a *Cheat*, and nothing else but the *Invention* of *Priests*; and carry'd on by their *Craft*, it makes their *Power* and *Wisdom* Greater than that of *Men*, *Angels* or *Devils*; and more than GOD Himself ever yet shew'd or express'd; to *Deceive* and *Impose* upon the *Senses* of *Mankind*, in such *publick* and *notorious matters of fact*.

XIII. And this *Miracle*, which the *Deists* must run into to avoid these Recorded of *Moses* and *Christ*, is much Greater and more astonishing then *All* the *Scriptures* tell of *Them*.

So that those Men. who laugh at all *Miracles*, are now oblig'd to Account for the Greatest of all, How the *Senses* of *Mankind* cou'd be Impos'd upon in such *publick matters of fact*.

And How then, they make the *Priests* the most *Contemptible* of all *Mankind*, since they make *Them* the sole *Authors* of this the *Greatest* of *Miracles!*

XIV. And since the *Deists* (these Men of *Sense* and *Reason*) have so *Vile* and *mean* an *Idea* of the *Priests* of all *Religions*, why do they not Recover the World out of the *Possession* and *Government* of such *Blockheads!* Why do they suffer *Kings* and *States* to be led by *Them!* To establish their *Deceits* by *Laws*; and inflict

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penalties upon the *Opposers* of them ! Let the *Deists* Try their Hands ! They have been Trying ; and are now very Busie about it. And free *Liberty* they have. Yet have they not prevailed. Nor ever yet did prevail in any *Civiliz'd* or *Generous Nation*. And tho' they have made some *Introads* among the *Hotintots*, and some other the most *Brutal* part of *Mankind*, yet are they still Exploded, and *Priests* have and do prevail against them, among not only the *Greatest*, But *Best* part of the World, and the most Glorious for *Arts*, *Learning*, and *Warr*.

XV. For as the *Devil* doth Ape God, in His *Institutions* of *Religion*, His *Feasts*, *Sacrifices*, &c. So likewise in His *Preists*, Without whom, no *Religion* whether *True* or *False*, can stand, *False* Religion is but a Corruption of the *True*; The *True* was before it ; tho' it followed close upon the Heels. The *Revelation* made to *Moses* is Elder than any *History* Extant in the Heathen World. The *Heathens*, in Imitation of Him, pretended likewise to their *Revelations* ; But I have given those *Marks* which Distinguish them from the *True* ; None of them have those four Marks before mentioned. Now the *Deists* think all *Revelations* to be Equally *pretended*, and a *Cheat* ; And the *Priests* of all *Religions* to be the same *Contrivers* and *Juglers*; and therefore they proclaim *Warr* equally against *All* : And are equally engag'd to bear the brunt of *All*. And if the Contest

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be only betwixt the *Deists*, and the *Priests*, which of them are the Men of the greatest *Parts* and *Sense*, let the *Effects* determine it; and let the *Deists* yield the *Victory* to their *Conquerors*, who, by their own Confession, carry all the World before them.

XVI. If the *Deists* say, that this is because all the Wold are *Blockheads*, as well as these *Priests* who govern them; that all are *Blockheads* except the *Deists*, who Vote themselves only to be men of *Sense*: This (besides the modesty of it) will spoil their Great and Beloved *Topick*, in behalf of what they call *Natural Religion* against the *Reveal'd*, *Viz*: Appealing to the common Reason of mankind: This they set up against *Revelation*; Think this to be sufficient for all the Ules of men, here, or hereafter, (if there be any After State) and therefore that there is no use of *Revelation*; this Common Reason they advance as *Infallible* at least, as the *Surest Guide*: Yet now cry out upon it, when it turns against them; When this *Common Reason* runs after *Revelation* (as it alwayes has done) then *Common Reason* is a *Beast*; and we must look for *Reason*, not from the *Common Sentiments* of *mankind*, but only from among the *Beaux* the *Deists!*

XVII. Therefore, if the *Deists* would avoid the *mortification* (which will be very uneasie to them) to *yield* and *Submit*, to be *subdu'd* and *hew'd* down before the *Priests*, whom of all

l Mankind, they *Hate* and *Despise*; if they ould avoid this, Let them confess, as the ruth is, That *Religion* is no Invention of *Priests*, but of Divine Original: That *Priests* ere instituted by the same *Author* of *Religion*; nd that their Order is a *perpetual* and *living onument* of the *matters of fact* of their *Religi-n*, instituted from the time that such *matters f fact* were said to be done, as the *Levites* rom *Moses*; the *Apostles*, and succeeding *Cler-y* from *Christ*, to this Day. That no *Hea-hen Priests* can say the same: They were not ppointed by the *Gods* whom they serv'd, but by others in after Ages. in Honour of those *Gods*. They cannot stand the Test of the *four Rules* before mentioned, which the *Christian Priests* can do; and they only. And it being old in the *matter of fact* of *Christ*, that such *Order* of *Priests* were by Him instituted, and to ontinue to the end of the World; if the *matters of fact* of CHRIST were *False*, then when ever they came to be invented, in after Ages, there cou'd be no such *Order* of *Christi-an Priests*; And the *matters of fact* of *Christ* being press'd to be True, no otherwise than as there was (at that time when they were invented) not only Publick *Sacraments* (as be-fore has been urged) but a visible Order of *Priests* to Administer them; Consequently here being then no such Order of Men visible n the World, must demonstrat the whole o be *False*; and so make it impossible to be

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Receiv'd, under the Circumstances before mention'd.

XVIII. Now the *Christian Priesthood*, as Instituted by *Christ* Himself, and Continued by *Succession* to this Day, being as *Impregnable* and *Flagrant a Testimony* to the Truth of the *Matters of Fact* of *Christ*, as the *Sacraments*, or any other Publick *Institutions*, besides that, if the *Priesthood* were taken away, the *Sacraments* and other Publick *Institutions*, which are administred by their hands must fall with them. Therefore the *Devil* has been most busie, and bent his greatest Force in all Ages against the *Priesthood*, knowing that if *That* go down, All go's with it.

XIX With the *Deists*, in this Cause, are joyn'd the *Quakers* and other of their *Dissenters* who threw off the Succession of our *Priesthood* (by which only it can be demonstrated) together with the *Sacraments* and Publick *Festivals*. And if the *Devil* could have prevail'd to have these Dropt, the *Christian Religion* would lose the most *Undeniable* and *Demonstrative* Proof for the Truth of the *Matters of fact* of our *Saviour*, upon which the Truth of His *Doctrine* does depend. Therefore we may see the Artifice and *Malice of the Devil*, in all these Attempts: And let those wretched *Instruments*, whom he ignorantly (and some, by a mis guided *Zeal*) has deluded thus to Undermine *Christianity*, now at last look back, and see the Snare in which they have been Taken

so

for if they had prevail'd, or ever should, *Christianity* Dies with them. At least, it will be renderd *Precarious*, as a thing of which no certain Proof can be given. Therefore, let those of them, who have any Zeal for the Truth, bless GOD that they have not prevail'd; and quickly leave them, and let all others be aware of them.

And let us Consider and Honour the *Priesthood*, *Sacraments*, and other *publick Institutions* of *Christ*, not only as *Means* of *Grace and Helps* to *Devotion*, but as the Great *Evidences* of the *Christian Religion*.

See Dr. Cockburns *Sermons*. Ser: p. 129.

Such *Evidences* as no *pretended Revelation* ever had, or can have. Such as do plainly distinguish it from all *Foolish Legends* and *Impostures* whatsoever.

XX. And now, last of all, if one word of Advice wou'd not be lost upon Men, who think so Unmeasureable of themselves as the *Deists*, you may Represent to them, what a Condition they are in, who spend their *Life* and *Sense*, which GOD has given them, in Ridiculing the Greatest of his *Blessing*, His *Revelations* of *Christ*, and by *Christ*, to Redeem those from *eternal misery*, who shall *Believe* in Him, and *Obey* His *Laws*. And that GOD, in his *Wonderfull Mercy* and *Wisdom*, has so Guarded His *Revelations*, as that it is past the Power of *Men* or *Devils* to *Counterfit*: And that there is no *Denying* of them, unless we will be so *Absurd*,

as to deny not only the *Reason*, but the Certainty of the *Outward Senses*, not only of *one* or *two* or *three*, but of *Mankind* in General. That this Case is so very plain, that nothing but want of Thought can hinder any to discover it. That they must yield it to be so plain, unless they can shew some *Forgery*, which has all the four Marks before set down. But if they cannot do this, they must quite their Cause, and yield a happy *Victory* over themselves: Or else sit down with all that *Ignominy* with which they have loaded the *Priests*; of being, not only the most pernicious, but (what will *gall them more*) the most *foolish* and *inconsiderat of Mankind*.

Therefore let them not think it an undervaluing of their *Worthiness*, that their whole Cause is comprised in less than two Sheets of Paper: And no more time bestow'd upon it, than it is worth.

July 17*th*.
1697.

FINIS

DECLARATION

OF

THE LORD GENERALL,

The Generall Officers, and the
rest of the Officers and Souldiers

OF

The SCOTS ARMIE.

New-castle, 27 *June* 1646.

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